

The Minutes of the Executive Council may be regarded as serving a double purpose. On the one hand they show the workings of the executive machinery and on the other, they contain the considered opinion of the most conservative section of the population.

Among the miscellaneous material one finds an early example of constitutional discussion through the medium of the press, which took place as a result of the death of the King, in 1820. This is included as illustrative of the popular interest in constitutional questions.

In editing the petitions for and against the proposed Act of Union of 1822, it was found that they may be divided into classes. Many of them repeat the arguments employed in others. For this reason a selection was made with the purpose of printing one example of every type of argument employed either for or against the measure.

Such are the principles upon which the documents have been selected and edited. The arrangement, as far as is convenient, is the same as in preceding volumes. The system of reference to documents by the series and volume numbers of the Public Archives has also been retained. It has not been found practicable to include documents dealing with developments in the Maritime Provinces. These will be dealt with separately at a later date.

A. G. D.
N. S.

OTTAWA,
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